

The CRUEL MIDVIFE.

Being a True Account of a most Sad and Lamentable DISCOVERY that has been lately made in the Village of POPLAR in the Parish of STEPNEY.

At the House of one Madame *Compton* alias *Norman* a Midwife, wherein has been discovered many Children that have been Murdered. Particularly Two that were lately found in a Hand-Basket on a Shelf in the Sellar, whose Skins, Eyes, and part of their Flesh were eaten by Vermin: The Skelliton of Six others that were found buried in the Sellar; with the design of digging for others in the Garden. With the manner of the Discovery.

A L S O

An Account of the Seizing or Apprehending, Behaviour, and Commitment to NEWGATE, of Madam *Compton* alias *Norman*, the Midwife, on the Account of Murthering these Infants.

Licensed according to Order.

L O N D O N,

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The Cruel Midwife of Poplar, &c.

EVery thing is carried on by a natural Instinct, to the Preservation of it self in its own Being: And by the same Law of Nature even the most brutish amongst the Brute themselves, may be observed to retain a special Kind of Indulgence and Tenderness towards the young The Monsters of the Sea draw out their Breasts, and give Suck to their Young ones. The barbarous Cruelties of some Midwives, Nurses, and even Parents to young Children, may assure us, That there are greater Monsters upon the Land than are to be found in the Bottom of the Deep; and if some of these may extenuate their Inhumanities, by I know not what Vertuous Pretences, yet the Barbarities of the rest must be wholly imputable to their savage Nature, and the blindness of their Disposition.

The Gentlewoman, who is the chief Subject or Occasion of the following Narrative is by Name *Crompton*, or least generally known among the Neighbour-hood by no other Name than *Madam Crompton*; she came to live at *Poplar*, which is near *Stepney*, about Two Years since, taking a large House, where none but
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Persons of considerable Rank had li-ved before, bringing with her at first only a Maid Servant, going for a Midwife of great note to Persons of Quality; here she had not continued long, before she was observed to have several Children of divers Ages; but all the time of her living in this Place has been very private, not in the least associating herself with any of the Neighbourhood, or coming to Church, &c. but her Maid Servant would often be in Discourse with some of the adjacent Neighbours Maids, being always very inquisitive with them, but she would never communicate any thing of her Mistresses Domestick Affairs. The Midwife herself was scarce ever seen in the Neighbourhood, not so much as to stand at the Door, but steping into the Coach early in the morning, and coming home in a Coach in the Night, and seldom or never were any Visitants seen to come thither, but only some Gentlemen and others often in the Evening or Night, except it were some of the Parish for the Kings Taxes, the Ministers, Poor or other Duties, which generally, if she hapen to be at home she readily paid them at the Door, or sent the Maid to them with the money and many complefant Words; she was observed to be often from home for several days together, yet so much

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was her maid servant her Confederate & Creature, that the Affaires of the House was kept so private and obscure from the Neighbour's, that they could not tell how many Children she had in the House, or how often changed, or otherwise disposed of: *Mrs. Crompton* is between Fifty and Threescore Years of Age, and her maid has often declared upon several Occasions, That her mistress has been a Midwife above Thirty Years; and 'tis generally said that she she has followed this barbarous Infant murdering Trade so long, the truth of which is best known to the Omnipresent God, the searcher of Hearts, who can bring the most hidden Things of Darkness to light, and from whom no Secret is hid, who for Reasons best known to his Providence, permits some Persons Sins to go before to Judgment, that is to be punished in this Life, and others to come after, that is, reserved to the Tribunal of the great Day.

Mrs. Crompton going out of Town the beginning of the last Week, on *Friday*, pretty early in the Morning, the Maid-servant (no doubt by the Order and Appointment of the Mistress) left the House likewise, leaving at home a Boy about Seven Years of Age, and a Girl about Six Years Old, with a little Infant

in the Cradle, leaving with them for Food only a piece of Cheese and Water, not any Beer or Bread, but bid the Boy, in case the young Child cryed, to give it some Water, and she would return in a little time; all which the Boy has since related: The Children continuing in the House alone most part of the Day, and no Maid returning, grew very impatient, and particularly for want of Sustenance, &c. and the Boy bringing of it into an outward Room next the Street, a Neighbour's Son passing by, and hearing the Child cry, called to the Boy to know what was the matter; to whom he declar'd, after some time, the Reasons: That they were left all alone in the House, without Victuals, and that the young Child was almost starved; after which, Neighbours being called, the Constable and Masters of the Parish were sent for, some of whom coming and entring the House, examined the two Chilgren, who declared as before mentioned; and farther, besides the Infant in the Cradle, the Boy declared there were two more that lay Dead in a Hand-basket upon a Shelf in the Cellar; another lay Buried in the Garden, and a Fourth in the Cellar: Upon present search, they found the Two Children in the Hand-basket as the Boy had said, they

they being most lamentable Objects of Humane Misery, looking at first sight, were liker the Carcasses of Catts or Doggs than Humane Creatures, all their skin being off, as likewise their Eyes and part of their Flesh eat with Vermin, stinking in a lamentable manner.

On *Monday* being 21st. Instant, the Coroners Inquest were Impanell'd, and coming to the House where the Dead Bodies lay in the Basket, after viewing of them, they ordered some Labourers (according to the Words of the Boy) to Dig in several soft places of the Cellar where they perceived the ground had been broken, where, after some time, they Dug up six several Skeletons of Children of several Ages; upon which Night coming on, the Coroner Adjourn'd the Jury till the next Day, resolving to have the ground in the Garden likewise to be broken up before they brought in their Verdict, many of the Spectators took several of the Bones and carried them away, some of which are now to be seen at the *Ben-Johnson's* Head, near *St. Brides* Church by *Fleetstreet*.

Who were the Parents of these Children, or upon what account this Midwife had the keeping of them, is not certainly known, though
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it's generally conjectured, and that not without a great deal of Reason, that these were those commonly called *By-blows*, or *Bastards*, which she undertook, for a certain Sum of Money agreed on, to ease the Parents of, by keeping them as long as they lived. It's hoped our Grandfire Time, that brings all things to light, will unvail the Darknesh of this hidden Mystery of Iniquity, and expose the Truth as the Sun at Noon-day; In the mean time great care is taken and search made in order to discover the Midwife or her Maid.

Postscript.

Tuesday, August 22. This Day the Coroner's Inquest met again, but were adjourned till Monday, on the Account that they had done digging in the Garden, and other ports for Children, and for other Reasons. This Day likewise about One in the Afternoon, our Madam Compton, alias Norman, was Apprehended near Covent-Garden, and with the Assistance of the Constables and Beadles, being led between two Men, attended with a numerous Croud of People; she was carried to the Petty Sessions of Bloomsbury, where she was Examined before their Majesties Justices of

of the Peace there sitting; who likewise took several Affidavits, by which she is vehemently suspected (if not positively charged) to have Murthered several Children that were put to her to Nurse; upon which she was from thence Committed to *Newgate*, by the Warrant or Mittimus signed by the Worshipfull Justices of the Peace then on the Bench.

When our Doughty Midwife was first seized, all the way she went to the Justices, and when she came before their Worships, she was observed to carry her self with a great deal of Confidence, not seeming in the least concern'd, or much denying the Fact. It has been observed that several Gentlemen and others have been seen to enquire at some of the Adjacent Ale-houses concerning some particular Children.

F I N I S.

